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Daze Jefferies

## Umbilicus

comforted hours through the lull of low dusk

Raining for a week now, tepid on flesh, with ten degree weather in the downtown periphery. Stay a little longer → the heart of our stroll on old Water Street is forever indulgent. Atmosphere swelled with merchantry's excess. You could feel it nearing when the ships were tied. Years an urbane fair sex had strayed from one end to another, kneeling into plenitude, window, slipway. Spin in a circle and watch how the dust haired lovergirl goes.

Haunt of breath, a humid dawn. Gossip evaporated out of their mouths (I learned this from a kittiwake who dwelled around the anchorage). Seabirds have talked to me since I was a baygirl. Nan said it's because my eyes are grey, a gift from God, and the gulls are seraphic.<sup>∪</sup> Can't believe angels eat fish guts and garbage, though, fending for yourself is an island-bound inheritance. At least until you refuse tradition, see. It got me w/here.

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<sup>∪</sup> when a bad date comes nearby  
dear sky witnesses squawk him away  
with droppings all over his gaudy auto



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Missing, the hole has a voice now: enough already.

Hear them? Mutual whispers resound against crestfallen overflow, tending to indifference. Mistress determined a patrolman's tongue will be cut out and fed to the feathered ones.<sup>∪</sup> Believe these whoregrounds were erected with love, clawed and extant, crevice-nesting. Dreamlike, all it took me to go, the poke of a licked finger deep in my umbilicus.

Tentacular light, known only as kinship, reached through The Narrows, capturing m/e. A throwaway coddess, pleasurer, severed, and dead to the world (never harbourfront whirlygirls), I woke on a raft made of drift-worn lumber. Blue top, body throbbing, rapt. No place to stumble and no past to drown in a foremother's bosom, but closer now. These bones'll wait for the gullies to circle and cry out over another offshore. Facing yet-to-last, an annum. Would she come to somewhere else?

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<sup>∪</sup> eggs are given as gesture or keepsake

honouring the presence of a body ephemeral

### **Biography**

Daze Jefferies (she/her) is an artist, writer, and educator who holds a Master of Gender Studies from Memorial University. She is the author of *Water/Wept* (Anstruther Press, 2023) and co-author (with Sonja Boon and Lesley Butler) of *Autoethnography and Feminist Theory at the Water's Edge: Unsettled Islands* (Palgrave, 2018).